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~ "Ditch the Pitch" Site ~ People Are Talking! ~ EPIC Cries Foul!  
~ Anti-Terrorism Bill! ~ Cyber War On bin Laden ~ EmuTOS Released!  
~ Adobe Patent Challenge ~ "Q" - GameCube Hybrid! ~ MSN Lockout?!  
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-\* Microsoft Launches WindowsXP \*-  
-\* Voluntary Web-Rating System Launch! \*-  
-\* Cleveland Free-Net Atari SIG Archive Open! \*-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"  
"\*\*\*\*\*"

It was such a nice week that I wish that it hadn't flown by so quickly!  
This will probably be the last week of really nice weather. In fact, it's  
supposed to be really cold - at least for this time of year - this weekend.  
At least I won't be too uncomfortable cleaning up leaves!

If you've been an Atari user for a number of years and, among other things,  
used your Atari computer getting online, you might want to check out the  
article in this issue pertaining to the Cleveland Free-Net Atari SIG archive  
that was recently launched. I remember dropping by lots of times over the  
years and it's a service that is sorely missed. There was lots of valuable  
information and news to be had there, and it's good to know that all of that  
is once again available. Check it out, I know that I plan to do so.

Lots of things to keep in mind in the next week or so. Daylight Savings  
Time is almost here again. I'm looking forward to that extra hour of sleep,  
but I'm sure going to hate seeing it get darker earlier and earlier for a  
few months! And Halloween is next week! Watch out for all the ghosts and  
goblins out there on the streets! I'm hoping that all that is going on in  
the world today doesn't deter parents from letting their children go out  
trick-or-treating. I really enjoy seeing all the kids dressed up in their  
Halloween best!

Until next time...

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Official Cleveland Free-Net Atari SIG Archive

I am proud to announce the launch of the Official Cleveland Free-Net Atari  
SIG Archive.

<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/>

The Cleveland Free-Net, a free dialup and telnet BBS offered through Case

Western Reserve University, was home to an active group of Atari users. The Atari SIG (special interest group) had information about every Atari platform, including 8-bit computers, 16/32-bit computers, Jaguar, Lynx, and Portfolio. The Cleveland Free-Net was shut down on September 30, 1999, but before it was, a complete backup of the Atari SIG was made.

Working with the folks who ran the forum, we have endeavored to preserve both the feel of the SIG and the information it contained. This is an amazing resource that exceeds 200 megabytes of data - much of which isn't available elsewhere.

"The Atari SIGOps hoped to preserve this extensive information resource we had built over the years. We approached [www.atariarchives.org](http://www.atariarchives.org) and Kevin Savetz with the idea of a permanent web archive of our SIG, and we couldn't be happier with the result." --Michael Current, [mcurrent@carleton.edu](mailto:mcurrent@carleton.edu), former 8-bit Atari SIGOp, Cleveland Free-Net Atari SIG.

Among the highlights:

A Time Capsule of Atari news items from 1986 - 1999  
<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/12/03/>

Atari 8-Bit Technical Reference Manual and upgrade guides  
<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/12/02/>

664 ST-related newsletters, including Z\*NET and STReport  
<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/06/08/>

A complete archive of Z\*Magazine  
<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/12/05/02/>

Reviews of 79 Lynx games  
<http://www.atariarchives.org/cfn/08/07/>

EmuTOS 011023 Released

Hi!

The first release of emutos is out. It is 011023. Get it here:

<http://emutos.sourceforge.net>

The file will be emutos-011023.tgz on sourceforge. There are not many things to say. Just, that not everything is perfect ;-)

Before baking the release I made the video mode detection going. You can now use EmuTOS also in color modes and the big screen option of some emulators also work, but just for mono mode. I have a bug: I think, that the font\_ring variable is not initialized. It is given by the 0xa000 function, but there is nothing in. This may be the reason, why in big 16 color modes the system is patched by STonX to use a big font, but the data is from the small one: Garbage is the result. All other modes work!

MinT is running (for a while). Also the final.tos demo, which is delivered with STonX.

Read the readme, if you want to make some experiments. Also have a look on the webpage: <http://emutos.sourceforge.net> . You will need some tools, if you want to compile the release the first time (new user/tester).

The low level disk I/O functions are completely not implemented. This means, that you just have a chance to let it run on an emulator, which patches this functionality in, like STonX does.

Here is a list of what may work (file: status.txt):

At first some more general things:

BOOT sequence

```
-----
X configure memory
X execute reset routine
- detect monitor type
  ...
- init floppy drives
- boot floppy
- boot DMA
- run AUTO prgs
X run 'command.prg'
```

BIOS devices

```
-----
- parallel port
- serial port
X console
X IKBD
X MIDI
X ascii
ACIA interrupt routines
```

```
-----
- midierr
- ikbderr
X midi input
X ikbd key events
- IKBD clock
- mouse
- joysticks
```

This is a list of the status of each more or less implemented function.

Here is, what the first field means:

```
- Not yet implemented
X Fully implemented
> Partially implemented
```

It is followed by the hex-number of the function and it's name:

BIOS Functions

```
-----
X 0x00 getmpb
X 0x01 bconstat      (the function works for console only)
X 0x02 bconin        (the function works for console only)
X 0x03 bconout        (the function works for console only)
```

```

> 0x04 rwabs
X 0x05 setexc
X 0x06 tickcal
- 0x07 getbpb
> 0x08 bcostat      (the function works for console only)
- 0x09 mediach
X 0x0a drvmap      (the function works, but not the devices)
X 0x0b kbshift

```

#### XBIOS Functions

---

```

- 0x00 initmous
- 0x01 ssbrk
X 0x02 _physBase
X 0x03 _logBase
X 0x04 _getRez
> 0x05 _setScreen    (the resolution change is ignored)
X 0x06 _setPallette
X 0x07 _setColor
- 0x08 _floprd
- 0x09 _flopwr
- 0x0a _flopfmt
- 0x0b used-by-BIOS
> 0x0c midiws
> 0x0d _mfprint
X 0x0e iorec
X 0x0f rsconf
X 0x10 keytbl
X 0x11 _random
- 0x12 _protobt
- 0x13 _flopver
- 0x14 scrdmp
- 0x15 cursconf
- 0x16 settime
- 0x17 gettime
X 0x18 bioskeys
X 0x19 ikbdws
X 0x1a jdisint
X 0x1b jenabint
- 0x1c giaccess
- 0x1d offgibit
- 0x1e ongibit
X 0x1f xbtimer
- 0x20 dosound
- 0x21 setprt
X 0x22 kbdvbase
- 0x23 kbrate
- 0x24 _prtblk
X 0x25 vsync
X 0x26 supexec
- 0x27 puntaes

```

#### GEMDOS Functions

---

```

X 0x00 Pterm0
X 0x01 Cconin
X 0x02 Cconout
X 0x03 Cauxin

```

```

X 0x04 Cauxout
X 0x05 Cprnout
X 0x06 Crawl0
X 0x07 Crawl1
X 0x08 Cnecin
X 0x09 Cconws
X 0x0a Cconrs
X 0x0b Cconis
X 0x0e Dsetdrv
X 0x10 Cconos
X 0x11 Cprnos
X 0x12 Cauxis
X 0x13 Cauxos
X 0x19 Dgetdrv
X 0x1a Fsetdta
X 0x20 Super
X 0x25 Ssetvec      (extra, not in available TOS)
X 0x2a Tgetdate
X 0x2b Tsetdate
X 0x2c Tgettime
X 0x2d Tsettime
X 0x2f Fgetdta
X 0x30 Sversion
X 0x31 Ptermres
X 0x35 Sgetvec      (extra, not available in TOS)
X 0x36 Dfree
X 0x39 Dcreate
X 0x3a Ddelete
X 0x3b Dsetpath
X 0x3c Fcreate
X 0x3d Fopen
X 0x3e Fclose
X 0x3f Fread
X 0x40 Fwrite
X 0x41 Fdelete
X 0x42 Fseek
X 0x43 Fattrib
X 0x45 Fdup
X 0x46 Fforce
X 0x47 Dgetpath
X 0x48 Malloc
X 0x49 Mfree
X 0x4a Mshrink
X 0x4b Pexec        (flag 6 not really handled)
X 0x4c Pterm
X 0x4e Fsfirst
X 0x4f Fsnext
X 0x56 Frename
X 0x57 Fdatetime

```

==== VDI =====

not implemented

==== AES =====

not implemented

Hope you enjoy it! And help and know-how is always welcome. The next

big thing would be to bring some graphics up, with MiNT, some VDI and some AES for MiNT. Or if you are experienced with disks?

--  
Martin

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone already. I'm starting to find it strange how the days can go by so slowly while the weeks simply whiz by.

While autumn is now in full swing, Mother Nature has again thrown us a curve here in southern New England. Today's 78 degrees Fahrenheit may not compare with the temperatures closer to the equator, but at this latitude it's quite uncommon for this time of year.

You'll have to pardon my preoccupation with the weather, but it's been quite strange to see the vivid colors of the autumn leaves and to have the temperature and humidity more indicative of early summer. A statistical aberration? Or En Nino or the Ozone Hole closing in on us? Only time will tell.

On another personal note, some of you might remember that I often complain about being so busy and how everything is always so rushed. Well, it looks like my hard work has lead me to.... MORE hard work.

As of next week, I'm manager of Quality Control for my company. I'm looking forward to my new responsibilities, but I realize that Quality Control in almost any company has the same aura as Internal Affairs does in a police department. Hey, if that's the worst thing I have to deal with, I'll be happy.

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
=====

John Garone asks about the difference between hard drive software:

"Is there a compatibility difference between HDDriver 8 and ICDboot? I'm trying to get Magic to run with ICD but will only run with HDdriver. But if I run HDDriver, it's seeing 4 x 250 meg partitions instead of the 8 x 125 meg partitioned with ICD!

I did have Magic and HDdriver running ok at one time but had problems with Cubase so I went back to ICD and no Magic. So now, in going back to HDDriver, there's the problem!"

Dr. Uwe Seimet tells John:

"That's a known issue MagiC and ICD will not (always) work as far as I know.

Note that the ICD default partitioning scheme is not Atari-compatible if there are more than 4 partitions. You have to convert this incompatible scheme to the AHDI compatible scheme before any other driver than ICDBOOT can recognize all partitions. The software ICD2AHDI by Thomas Binder will do this and is included in the HDDRIVER distribution."

John asks Uwe:

"Can ICD2AHDI be used without loosing data already in the HD ?"

Uwe replies:

"Yes, there is no loss of data."

'Sage' asks:

"Just out of curiosity, what aspect of the ICD formatting is not AHDI compatible?"

Uwe tells Sage:

"It's not the formatting but the partitioning. Formatting is always platform-independent.

AHDI uses a linked list of root sectors if more than 4 partitions are present. The ICD software's default is putting up to 8 partition entries into the first root sector, which is not what the standard mandates. As a result most non-ICD drivers do not recognize more than 4 partitions."

Sven de Marothy asks about getting a TOS image:

"Sorry, this should really be addressed to an electronics newsgroup, but anyway:

How can I get a TOS-image dump from the EPROMs in my old atari?  
The thing won't boot due to a broken floppy-controller (I think), but I'd still like to get a tos-dump (as a binary file). How could one do this?

(I have no real knowledge of EPROM beyond the fact that they store stuff..)

Lyndon Amsdon tells Sven:

"Without the floppy disk working there is nowhere to store your image. You could dump it via serial port but then you still don't have software on the machine to write the program to do this. The only way would be to use an EPROM reader."

'Grazey' adds:

"Well all major TOS's have already been dumped, many are available for download at <http://homepage.mac.com/carlhafner/AtariTOS.html>

They're on the net as ST emulators such as (STeem, Saint and Winston) require them."



Jeffrey Worley asks about CDROM'ing his ST:

"When I bought my link II interface for my mega back in 96 or 97 it came with a version of MiNT which would enable a cdrom. I'm running a much later version of MiNT on my mega4 now and really would like to move data via cd or some other way than slip at 19200 baud.

Is there a MiNT way to mount a cdrom?"

Martin-Eric Racine tells Jeff:

"The simplest way is to use a recent MiNT kernel with the SPIN! package. SPIN includes a BIOS driver and a MiNT filesystem driver, which is all you need. References regarding MiNT and SPIN! at:

<http://www.freemint.de/>"

Jared Falvo asks about the possibility of a mini-ST:

"With today's SMD resistors and capacitors and other miniaturized components, having an actual ST 1040ST in vastly less space should be entirely possible. Couple this "mini ST" into the gut of a Neotari computer and... hmm."

James Alexander tells Jared:

"The one thing to keep an eye out for is the atari specific components, they'd still be the same size as always unless you located a compatible replacement."

Jared asks James:

"Couldn't you just "emulate" them (the custom chips) with some GAL's/PAL's or other hardware?"

James tells Jared:

"For some of them yes but it may not save space that way. Other possibilities are for small quantities is to order the originals from best electronics, or a better plan would be to find a close equivalent and use some pal/gal logic (if needed) to keep the new replacements compatible with the original. Also since some new ports would be in order, say like usb or firewire, some modifications to Tos would be good idea to keep stuff working ok."

Peter Persson adds his thoughts:

"It could get quite small.  
0402 resistors/capacitors, resistornets, a couple of larger PLD:s for memorymapping etc, a standard MFP, a couple of ACIA:s, a simple IDE interface, floppy controller. The largest problem would probably be ST/STE compatible video."

Iggy Drougge asks about fixing a forgotten config file:

"I recently tried to install RISCPLAYER as an accessory on my SH205, but forget to put its configuration file along with the program itself in the root of the drive. Now, every time I boot my STE with the SH205 plugged in, a requester will just pop up, telling me that the config file has

gone missing, and when the requester is dismissed, the machine will reboot, repeating the same procedure over and over again.  
What am I to do? The HD seem to take priority over the disk drive."

David Bolt tells Iggy:

"Try holding down the ALT, CTRL and/or SHIFT keys when booting. Most (all?) HD driver software will not run when a certain key/key combination is pressed, letting you get to the desktop."

Peter West asks Iggy:

"Which hard disk driver are you using? With HDDRIVER you can boot off a floppy with HDDRIVER.PRG on it by pressing the 'A' key during the boot process. If you don't have this on a disk, hold down 'D' and the SH205 will boot from there without trying to load the accessories. Then go to C:\ and either add the CFG file, or delete RISCPLAYER and start again.

If you are using another driver, download the demo version of HDDRIVER and try that (of course you will need access to a machine that connects to the web!). His pages are at:

[http://home.nikocity.de/nogfradelt/atari\\_english.html](http://home.nikocity.de/nogfradelt/atari_english.html)"

Our own Keeper of the Flame, TJ Andrews, asks about using a hard drive on both PC and ST:

"I just got a couple of great deals on some 200Mb Syquest drives and carts.

I've had one for years on my Mega STe and now expect to put at least one on my PC. I have two questions:

Is there any way I can get either Windows 98 to read/write to an Atari Syquest cart, or alternatively, get an Atari to read/write a Windows 98 cart? I can think of some times when I might want to transfer some files(graphics mostly, I think-for PageStream) from the PC to the Mega STe, and while I can use floppies the Syquest would be much quicker. I currently use ICD software on my Mega STe.

If I were to get an emulator for the PC, could I use the ST Syquest carts I now have set up, or would I have to make new ones? I'd need to be able to "boot" the emulator system from the ST carts for them to work properly, and I'd need for the emulator to see the partitions on the carts as the Atari C:, D:, etc drives."

Uwe Seimet tells TJ:

"Yes, this is possible with cartridges that were partitioned with a single partition that is both PC and Atari compatible. HDDRIVER supports this and except for HDDRIVER no additional software is required for the Atari or PC. See [http://www.seimet.de/atari\\_english.html](http://www.seimet.de/atari_english.html) for more information."

Glenn Bruner adds:

"I've had some experience doing this. I can't say for sure if it can be done on the PC. But I've done it on my Mac using MagicMac.

It's easy to do on the Mac since the SCSI bus is built in to the system. I connect the Syquest drive (or a ST hard drive) and run MagicMac. I will get a icon to the hard drive on the Magic desktop. I then just copy the files to the Mac hard drive then burn them onto CD.

Since the developers have come out with MagicPC, this might be a possibility.

I have tried using TOSBox on the PC and see if I could get it to see the drive. Had no luck. The trick is to somehow get the drive mounted and seen by the Windows OS. If this can be done, then you should be able to read the AHDI partition using TOSBox."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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Keeper of the Flame  
by Thomas J. Andrews  
tj@atarinews.org

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Xbox Marathon Coming!  
"Q", The GameCube Hybrid!  
SegaNet To Be Pay Service!  
And much much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!  
"

Matsushita Sets December 14 Launch  
For DVD-GameCube Combo

Matsushita Electric Industrial Co Ltd said on Friday it would release a hybrid of Nintendo Co's GameCube console that can play DVDs on December 14.

Retailers will be allowed to set their own price for the machine, named

"Q", but the company plans to sell it for 39,800 yen (\$328.70) on its Web site, a Matsushita spokesman said.

Nintendo launched the GameCube last month with a price tag of 25,000 yen, and is set to release it in North America next month.

Matsushita failed to break into the video game market with its 3DO console in the 1990s.

By offering the multipurpose version of the GameCube, the company aims to compete with arch-rival Sony Corp., whose popular PlayStation 2 game console can play DVDs.

Matsushita, Japan's largest home electronics maker, aims to produce 15,000 of the box-shaped machines each month, with a sales target of 100,000 in the first year.

Matsushita and Nintendo agreed in May 1999 on a comprehensive tie-up in game machines using DVD technology.

#### Xbox to Be Unleashed at 48-Hour Video Game Marathon in New York And Los Angeles

#### Microsoft Hosts Ultimate Gameplay Marathon for the Ultimate Game System

On Nov. 2 and Nov. 3 in New York and Los Angeles, the Xbox team from Microsoft will present Xbox Unleashed, a 48-hour continuous gameplay marathon pitting gamers against one another in intense head-to-head competition. In addition to providing gamers with the chance to get their hands on the Xbox video game system and Xbox games before the system is available at retail, Xbox Unleashed will allow gamers to compete in full public view and show the world what serious gameplay is all about.

The 48-hour marathon will test participants' skills on many of the exhilarating and diverse Xbox games that will be available at launch, including "'Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding," "'Fuzion Frenzy," "'Halo" and "'Project Gotham Racing" from Microsoft Game Studios; "'DOA3" from Tecmo; "'Cel Damage" from Electronic Arts; "'NASCAR Heat 2002" from Infogrames; and "'Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2x" from Activision. Cumulative scores for each competitor will be tracked, and at the end of the marathon the gamer with the most points in each location will be crowned the Ultimate Xbox Gamer.

The winners will walk away with bragging rights and one of three prize packages. The grand prize is a customized Ford Explorer Sport Trac with Pioneer Audio/Video systems and an integrated Xbox system. Second place is an Xbox console and Xbox games, as well as a spring break trip for four to San Felipe in Baja California, Mexico, sponsored by Official Xbox Magazine. Third place is an Xbox console and Xbox games, food for a year from Taco Bell and beverages for a year from SoBe. Taco Bell will be on site at the marathon offering samples of its new chicken quesadilla, and SoBe will be serving beverages for the duration of the video game marathon at both the New York and Los Angeles venues.

Gamers who want to experience Xbox and the games at their own pace can choose the noncompetitive, free play area, which will also include prize

giveaways and entertainment. In addition to the titles featured in the competitive area, gamers in the free play area will have access to "'Madden NFL 2002" and "'NASCAR Thunder 2002" from Electronic Arts; "'Mad Dash Racing" from Eidos; "'NHL Hitz 20-02" from Midway; "'Oddworld: Munch's Oddyssey" and "'NFL Fever 2002" from Microsoft Game Studios; "'TransWorld Surf" from Infogrames; and Shrek from TDK Mediactive. DJs from 92.3 K-ROCK in New York and 106.7 KROQ in Los Angeles will broadcast live from the event.

"'Xbox Unleashed will capture the true spirit of what it means to be a gamer: fierce competition, loads of intensity and lack of sleep," said John O'Rourke, director of Xbox Sales and Marketing at Microsoft. "'We're very excited to bring gamers together for 48 hours to unleash the Xbox difference and preview some of the most highly anticipated games of all time before they are available at retail."

Before the marathon, gamers across the country will have the opportunity to win\* a place at the "'head of the line" and be among the first round of gamers to kick off the competition at Xbox Unleashed. From now until Oct. 24, Xbox.com will host an online contest at <http://www.xbox.com/unleashed/>. Gamers who correctly answer a series of trivia questions will be entered into a drawing from which two lucky winners will win travel and accommodations courtesy of Xbox.com to attend Xbox Unleashed (one to New York City and one to Los Angeles to be determined by Xbox).

#### Marathon Details

Xbox Unleashed will start in each location at 12:01 a.m. local standard time on Friday, Nov. 2, and end at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 3. Event locations are as follows:

New York  
Metronome  
915 Broadway (at 21st Street)  
New York, NY 10010

Los Angeles  
Universal City Walk  
100 Universal City Plaza  
Universal City, CA 91608

#### Sega to Charge for Online Game Network

The online arm of Japanese game publisher Sega Corp. said on Tuesday it would begin charging \$9.95 a month as of Nov. 1 for unlimited access to its online network for multiplayer video games.

SegaNet allows people with Sega's Dreamcast video game console to play Internet-enabled games against each other across the network. It was also an Internet service provider, but that service was discontinued in July and customers transferred to EarthLink Inc.

Sega said its most popular Internet game, "'Phantasy Star Online," has 300,000 online players.

A Sega spokesman said all of the current users of SegaNet would have to begin paying as of Nov. 1 to continue accessing the service. Existing users

were notified of the change on Tuesday.

The spokesman added that because Phantasy Star Online runs on a separate server system from SegaNet, its players will be "the exception to the rule" and will not have to pay a monthly fee.

The Dreamcast was also discontinued earlier this year, but Sega still supports and publishes games for the platform, and has also said SegaNet will support online games for Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox and Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s GameCube, both of which are to launch in the United States in mid-November.

Sega said in a statement the "new" SegaNet will include features like instant messaging, game tournaments and member profile pages.

#### Electronic Arts Announces Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 for the PlayStation 2

The cops are back... and better than ever! Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system builds upon the original Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit's legacy by delivering a more intense, arcade racing experience on the next-generation game system. Moreover, the game stays true to the award-winning Need For Speed (NFS) heritage by delivering a stable of exclusive licensed exotics from the world's most coveted car manufacturers. Currently under development, Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 for the PlayStation 2 console is scheduled for release by Electronic Arts in Spring 2002.

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 will feature more than 20 of the most desired licensed exotics -- including Ferrari, Lamborghini and Porsche, to name a few -- rendered in crisp next generation detail complete with animated in-game drivers. The game will feature more than 12 unique courses, which provide the widest variety of driving challenges. In addition, the game will include a variety of open road environments that truly come to life, consisting of river crossings, waterfalls, beach surf, dusty paths and brush fires.

Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 will offer an array of unique gameplay features and modes, and as indicated by the name will challenge the driver to dodge traffic, evade police and natural elements in high speed and high style... true NFS style. The game's highly intuitive Artificial Intelligence for the opponents and the police will further immerse the player into the ultimate exotic car fantasy where they can drive these cars at their limit or get caught trying. Opponent racers and the police will have distinct and unique driving styles challenging the racer to learn arrest patterns in order to beat the cops and win the race. The NFS cops will also display different personalities that the racer will learn to recognize.

For added excitement, the player will be challenged to become the "Ultimate Road Racer" by winning numerous racing events, all carrying various rewards such as cars, tracks, upgrades, paint jobs, game modes and Easter eggs. The game will also feature split screen multiplayer support.

Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 for the PlayStation 2 is being developed by Black Box, a Vancouver-based development company. Electronic Arts, under the EA GAMES, will publish and distribute the game worldwide.

The Force Comes Alive in LucasArts' New  
Flight-Action Epic Star Wars Jedi  
Starfighter for Playstation 2

'Remember, a Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him.' -- Obi-Wan Kenobi

The critically-hailed STAR WARS Starfighter flight-action game series returns with the power of the Force in STAR WARS Jedi Starfighter from LucasArts Entertainment Company LLC. Inspired by the success of its predecessor, which debuted at the top of the PlayStation 2 sales charts upon release last March (according to NPD/TRST), Jedi Starfighter features the sleek and agile new Jedi starfighter from the upcoming motion picture Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones. The game, expected to release spring 2002 on PlayStation 2, also marks the first-ever availability of Force powers in a Star Wars flight action title.

Jedi Starfighter presents 15 exhilarating one and two-player cooperative story-based missions set amidst a variety of new and beautifully rendered worlds and environments, as featured in Attack of the Clones. In addition to the Jedi starfighter, players can battle in three other original heavily armed and highly maneuverable craft, the Havoc, Zoomer and Freefall. Missions take place over land and in space, with players skirmishing against more than 40 starships and capital-class vessels -- including some notable enemy craft from the upcoming Star Wars film.

'Jedi Starfighter presents gamers with their first opportunity to experience the richness of Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones,' says Simon Jeffery, president of LucasArts. 'Not only does the game introduce players to locations and craft from the movie, its gameplay expands beyond the story line of the film itself and develops characters established in STAR WARS Starfighter.'

A key highlight of Jedi Starfighter is the presence of its swift and stealthy namesake craft from Attack of the Clones. The Jedi starfighter is the ship of choice for the Jedi, and unlike any other in the Star Wars universe. By virtue of a Jedi pilot, players will have a variety of unique Force powers at their fingertips throughout various points in the game. Force lightning saps the power systems of enemy ships and renders pilots unconscious. Force shield creates an energy barrier that deflects laser blasts. Force reflex simulates exaggerated reflexes and perception of the Jedi Knight pilot by putting the world in slow motion while the Jedi starship retains normal turning and shooting abilities. Force shockwave produces a powerful energy surge, which radiates multi-directionally.

Jedi Starfighter follows the dramatic exploits of two unlikely heroes, Jedi Master Adi Gallia and alien pirate Nym, who forge an alliance to fight the nefarious Captain Cavik Toth, his Sabaoth Squadron, and the evil Trade Federation. The game's intriguing narrative is original, though it intersects with key events from Attack of the Clones, including the climactic battle. In the game Adi's mission is to foil a plot that could spell certain doom for the Jedi. Nym, the skillful Havoc pilot from STAR WARS Starfighter, fights to reclaim the home planet from which the Trade Federation so cruelly drove him. Without the brave resistance efforts of Adi and Nym, the very existence of the Jedi Knights and future of the Star Wars galaxy hang perilously in the balance.

Jedi Starfighter introduces players to the two main characters and their starships through a mini-training campaign. In one-player mode, players will fly as Adi Gallia and Nym. Adi Gallia, a well-respected and very skillful Jedi Master, pilots the Jedi starfighter. Nym, a former pirate who has become a powerful rebel leader, flies the Havoc, which has been upgraded from the original game with three new weapons: cruise missiles, cluster missiles, and proximity mines.

Two-player cooperative mode features additional supporting characters and ships. Reti, a crafty Toydarian, pilots the Zoomer, which is equipped with laser cannons and a chain gun. Jenkins, Nym's resourceful right-hand man, flies the Freefall, outfitted with laser cannons and drone fighters.

Jedi Starfighter has a significantly enhanced 3D game engine and will deliver cutting-edge, realistic graphics, spectacular effects, greater gameplay depth, and vastly improved performance. The game's engine is capable of rendering truly expansive environments and extraordinarily detailed craft, providing players with an incredible sense of immersion and realism.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Microsoft Launches XP With Worldwide Hype

Software giant Microsoft launched the latest version of its flagship Windows software on Thursday, reeling in the chief executives of top computer companies to kick off a \$250 million marketing campaign in the heart of New York.

To a backdrop of a gospel choir singing "America the Beautiful," Bill Gates, Microsoft's co-founder and Chief Software Architect took the stage alongside New York's Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, as the CEOs of Intel Corp., Hewlett-Packard Co., Dell Computer Corp., and Compaq Computer Corp. looked on from the sidelines.

"There was only one place to launch Windows XP," Gates told the 2,000-strong audience in a hotel on Times Square. "Right here in the heart of New York."

Microsoft's top dogs were all out in force for the launch of the software, which comes loaded with multimedia and Internet features. Windows XP has been pre-installed on new personal computers for weeks, but became available in shops on Thursday for \$199, or \$99 for an upgrade.

True to form, Microsoft threw launch parties around the globe, schmoozing thousands of customers and business partners. Some 400 million people already use older versions of Windows, the No. 1 PC operating software, Microsoft said.



Microsoft Chief Executive Steve Ballmer held the fort in London, as Gates, clad in a Windows XP baseball jacket, described the launch of XP as the version of Windows that will "take the PC industry to new heights."

"We've poured literally billions of dollars of development into this new product," Gates told the audience, noting the host of new security, privacy and messaging features that come integrated as part of Windows XP.

Although many of these features have been available on PCs for some time, Gates said Windows XP was the first time they'd all been brought together in one easy-to-use system.

"This gives them the ability to do what they do now in a much simpler way," Gates said.

Windows XP does away with the decades-old DOS fundamentals on which its predecessors were built, sharing instead the basic source code of Windows 2000, which analysts said makes the operating system much more stable and less likely to crash.

"Today, this is the end of the MS-DOS era ... the end of too many PC crashes," Gates said of the 13-year effort to replace Microsoft's original operating system with a DOS-free Windows.

Microsoft has long touted XP as the product that could help boost flagging PC sales, which fell more than 10 percent in the third quarter, according to research firm Gartner Dataquest.

But U.S recession fears and dwindling consumer confidence after the Sept. 11 air attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. have dimmed hopes for an all-out revival of the sector.

Microsoft did its best to boost optimism, reeling in Regis Philbin, the host of the U.S quiz show, "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?" and even hiring pop star Sting to perform a free afternoon concert in nearby Bryant Park.

Times Square itself was transformed into a kind of adult Disneyland, where Microsoft even roped the "Naked Cowboy" -- a guitar-strumming 30-year old male clad only in underwear, boots, and Windows XP stickers -- to sing XP's praises to onlookers.

"It is a galvanizing force for the industry," Jim Allchin, president of Microsoft's platforms group that oversees Windows, and the man credited by Gates as being the driving force behind Windows XP, told Reuters.

"It will have an impact, but given the terrorists, given the world economy, who knows when that will be?" Allchin said, adding. "It's only a product."

Dataquest forecasts that the consumer PC market will move rapidly to adopt Windows XP for the home, with 87 percent of new Windows PCs running the new program in 2002. But, in the business market, XP will be the choice of only 16 percent of Windows PCs. The older Windows 2000 will remain the preferred choice for business users, Dataquest said.

Allchin said XP was 30 times more reliable than Windows 98 and 20 times more reliable than Windows 2000. Before XP, he admitted, failure rates were "very high."

To thunderous applause, Giuliani said the event ``couldn't have come at a better time," for the city, just six weeks after hijacked planes devastated the twin towers of the World Trade Center, crippling New York's financial community and bringing much of the city's business to a standstill.

But as some noted, the timing for PC users might not be so ideal, especially for those who recently bought new machines. The latest Windows version requires more computer memory and a faster microprocessor, forcing businesses and consumers to upgrade their PC or, rather, buy a new one, analysts said.

``It uses up a lot more resources ... you have upgrade memory, you have to make sure you have enough disk space," said Bobby Orbach, an executive with venture capital firm TechFarm, and a veteran of the computer retail industry in New York.

Other critics object to the fact that Microsoft has chosen to integrate dozens of Web features and tools that until now had to be separately installed, and could only be obtained from a variety of vendors.

Examples in Windows XP include a digital media player that competes with software from RealNetworks Inc. The instant messaging software goes head to head with a rival products from AOL Time Warner Inc. and Yahoo! Inc.

Microsoft's decision to integrate its Web browser into an earlier version of Windows was at the heart of the U.S. government's antitrust case against the software company, which is still pending in U.S. District Court.

``The only critics I know of are the competitors who don't want the Windows platform to move forward," Gates said on CNBC on Thursday, referring to Windows XP. ``There's nothing that a third party can't add into Windows."

#### XP Accessory: 20MB of Updates

People rushing out to buy Windows XP on Thursday may be surprised by the hefty package of downloads already available for updating the brand-new operating system.

Depending on the version of XP--Home for consumers or Professional for businesses--people will be assailed with 20MB or more in downloads. Some fix security holes, others resolve glitches and a few add new features.

Regular updates are something consumers may have to get used to with XP, which offers more of a "push" method of delivery than the "pull" function found in earlier Windows versions. With the new OS, Microsoft for the first time has the capability of sending updates proactively to customers.

In discussing a new Microsoft security program earlier this month, Brian Valentine, senior vice president of the Windows division, said the automatic feature would be essential to delivering "important security updates" to XP users.

For consumers with broadband connections, the new feature could be a great way of keeping XP up to date. But for those dialing up with a modem and for some businesses, the feature could be an unwanted nuisance.

In fact, market researcher Gartner recommends that businesses exercise caution utilizing the feature.

"Most businesses are better centralizing updates and testing them to make sure they don't clobber any of their applications," Gartner analyst Michael Silver said.

Overall, analysts said, XP users should expect to see more updates than with any other version of Windows, in part because of all the new bundled features. Microsoft's XP kitchen-and-sink approach throws in everything from CD burning to a firewall to videoconferencing.

Jorge Lozano, a computer sciences student from the University of Idaho, doesn't see that as a problem.

"I personally believe that all of the bundled features are good for the customer as long as they have a choice for other programs. But, in any case, the bundled programs that come with Windows XP are good enough for daily use," he said.

Lozano praised the firewall and moviemaking software.

Stephen Gower, a software developer in Seattle, offered a different opinion.

"Regarding Microsoft's automatic update, I think it's not a terrible idea but (it) does have the potential to become rather annoying," he said. "It seems like the version of Windows Media Player I have already bugs me about downloading a new version sometimes."

Gower's experience with Windows Media Player makes him question the value of the automatic update feature.

"I'm really becoming skeptical about whether an update from Microsoft will actually provide a better product than the older version," he said.

Soon after installing Windows XP, a consumer will see a pop-up box on the task bar instructing him or her to stay current with automatic updates. Clicking on that box brings three options: download the updates automatically and notify when they are ready to install; notify before downloading; or disable automatic updating.

While the first option will fetch the downloads automatically, the user still decides which updates to install and when.

Like with older versions of Windows, users can also manually get updates.

A number of the updates are critical, meaning they affect Windows XP security. One 5.2MB update addresses a security vulnerability with the Microsoft virtual machine used for displaying some Web content. Another 1.9MB update addresses a security hole in Internet Explorer 6; the problem also occurs in Internet Explorer 5.5.

Microsoft also addresses a number of glitches discovered after releasing XP's final, or gold, code to manufacturing. One fixes a problem when connecting to un-interruptible power supplies, while another updates the CD burning function. A 2.2MB download addresses third-party software compatibility. A 794KB file fixes a glitch with the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard. And an 826KB update resolves popping sounds from the PC

speakers during the use of Windows Messenger, an instant messaging program.

Two programs get hefty updates. Windows Movie Maker 1.2 is available as a 3.2MB download, as well as Windows Messenger, which must be upgraded through Microsoft's MSN Web site and not the update feature.

Depending on a person's computer, there may be additional driver and other downloads specific to the hardware.

Although Microsoft says that Windows XP can be installed safely over an older version of the operating system, Silver strongly opposed this.

"Everybody should do a clean install, back up their data and restore all their applications," he said. "If they do that they will have a much better experience. I lived through that."

Silver ran into slow system performance problems and other issues after installing Windows XP over Windows 2000. He later started from scratch with just XP.

For the majority of retail buyers purchasing the upgrade version of Windows XP, they will need their original Windows install discs during the installation process.

XP users should also prepare for a new process called Product Activation. This feature literally "locks" the software to the hardware. Upon installation, the user is given the option of connecting to Microsoft to "activate" Windows XP. No personal information is disclosed to Microsoft unless the XP user chooses to register the product at the same time.

Product Activation raised some controversy because too many hardware changes could force the customer to have to reactivate XP by calling Microsoft. The software giant later loosened up the feature, which is now triggered only if six pieces of hardware are changed over 120 days.

No other feature has drawn fire from users more than product activation. Gower said he is "one of the folks who plan to boycott XP because of its product activation feature."

#### AOL, MSN, Yahoo Adopt Voluntary Web-Rating System

An effort to provide Web sites with content labels similar to those used for movies picked up steam Monday as the three largest online networks said they would participate.

AOL Time Warner Inc., Yahoo Inc. and Microsoft Corp.'s MSN network said they would adopt a voluntary content system that would allow users to screen out Web sites that contained violent, sexual or other possibly objectionable content.

Representatives of the three companies were scheduled to appear at a news conference Tuesday morning with the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) to announce the action.

The ICRA system is currently available free to Web surfers who use Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser and Windows operating system.

A free download that will make the system available to all Windows users should be released by next spring, said Mary Lou Kenny, ICRA's executive director for North America.

The ICRA system is not available for other operating systems.

The system has been actively promoted in Europe for two years, but has had a low profile in the Western Hemisphere until now.

The participation of AOL, Yahoo and MSN should change that, Kenny said. The three online networks account for half of all U.S. Internet traffic.

'It is the catalyst we need to launch this campaign," she said in a telephone interview.

Web site owners who want to participate answer a series of questions about the nature of the site's content. The ICRA system then generates a descriptive tag that is embedded in the site's HTML code.

Users can set their Internet browser or operating system to choose a variety of settings and sensitivity levels, allowing them to block pornographic sites, for example, but not sex-education sites.

Other categories include violence, gambling, foul language, and drug and alcohol use. Users can set their own preferences or use templates developed by interest groups such as the Anti-Defamation League.

Kenny said it is in Web site owners' best interest to describe their contents honestly.

'Adult sites are our best customers because they don't want children to visit because they don't have a credit card and take up bandwidth," she said.

#### U.S. Opens 'Ditch the Pitch' Web Site

As part of its new "Operation Ditch the Pitch" campaign, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has inaugurated a redesigned Web site called "Telemarketing Fraud: Ditch the Pitch," designed to alert consumers to potential telemarketing scams, how to avoid them, and how to fight back when targeted.

The FTC officially introduced Operation Ditch the Pitch on Thursday. Attorneys general of several states, including Virginia, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Illinois, have already pledged support for the new campaign, and more may do so in the future.

The FTC has estimated that consumers are bilked out of over US\$40 million every year through various forms of telemarketing fraud. The agency does not have figures available for similar fraud perpetrated by e-mail or other Internet scammers -- an area that most experts believe causes consumers similar headaches.

"Using masterful misrepresentations, fraudulent telemarketers are making cold calls to offer worthless credit card protection services, 'guaranteed loans,' and so-called 'protection' from identity theft," Howard Beales,

director of FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a prepared statement. "They are stealing billions of dollars from unwary consumers.

"The fact is that consumers should feel as comfortable telling a cold caller not to phone them again as they do refusing entry to a stranger at their front door."

The FTC's new Web site informs consumers of some basic rules. For example, telemarketers can phone legally only between the hours of 8 AM and 9 PM; it is illegal for telemarketers to require a consumer to pay a fee on any promised loan before it is delivered; and Americans cannot legally enter foreign sweepstakes and lotteries. Thus, any telemarketer or spam-artist who promises consumers a chance to purchase a ticket for a high-stakes Australian lottery is offering nothing but a swindle.

In addition, the new site warns consumers of typical scams, how to avoid being taken in such scams, and ways to contact the FTC, either online or by telephone, if they believe they have been ripped off.

Throughout the Web pages comprising the FTC's site, consumers are warned multiple times not to give out their credit card or bank account numbers, social security numbers, and other information that might leave them vulnerable to identity theft.

Paul Ritter, program manager for Internet market strategies at research firm The Yankee Group, told NewsFactor Network that it would make sense for the FTC's new Web site to join forces with a similar Web site sponsored by the FBI -- the Internet Fraud Complaint Center (IFCC) -- given that their objectives appear to overlap in certain areas.

"It would because there's a synergy to be gained [for the two agencies] to work in a collaborative way," Ritter said.

The FTC's objectives have law enforcement implications much like the FBI's, while the FBI's site also touches upon consumer behaviors and attitudes, Ritter said. The major difference between them is that the FBI's investigations focus more on criminal violations, while the FTC tends to zero in on civil violations.

#### Tech Giants Pan Anti-piracy Mandate

Technology industry heavyweights are trying to kill a Hollywood-backed plan heading for Congress that would require anti-piracy protections in PCs, CD players and other consumer electronics devices.

After weeks of conference calls and quiet rallying of the troops, technology companies including Intel, IBM, Microsoft and Compaq Computer held a coming-out press conference Monday to oppose a broad copyright protection proposal being backed by Walt Disney and Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S. C.

The plan has yet to be introduced as a bill, but it has been the source of intense debate since August, when drafts first began reaching the public. The technology companies' event appeared to be aimed at pre-empting a Senate hearing on the issue scheduled for later this week.

"This legislation would be an unwarranted intrusion by the government into

the commercial marketplace," said Ken Kay, executive director of the Computer Systems Policy Project, a trade group that includes IBM, Intel, Dell Computer, Motorola and others as members. "This would freeze technology...(and) force government to pick winners and losers."

The fuss over a bill that hasn't even been introduced yet is a sign of just how high the stakes are in this battle, in which both content and technology companies see their future businesses at risk. But there is also a hint of battle-weariness in the speed with which each side has hardened its lines.

The movie, music and technology industries have been trying for years, with only limited success, to agree on a standard way of protecting content from Internet and other digital piracy. A high-profile effort dubbed the Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI), intended to be a private sector version of the kind of technology effort Hollings' plan outlines, collapsed largely because of disagreements between technology and content companies.

Hollings' plan would restart this process, this time with the force of law behind it, and apply it to all digital devices.

The early draft bill would require the technology industry to come to its own decision on a copy-protection standard within 18 months, or else have the government step in to mandate a solution.

The bill would bar the sale of any "interactive digital device" that did not have the anti-piracy technology built in. It would also be illegal to remove or disable the security technology as well as to remove the piracy protections from a song, movie or other piece of content.

Digital civil liberties groups, such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and technology trade associations immediately and fiercely opposed the idea.

The bill's backing appears insecure. While Disney has come out strongly and publicly in favor of the idea, other studios and content companies have been more circumspect. Washington insiders say that News Corp. supports the idea but AOL Time Warner does not stand behind the plan in its current form.

The Motion Picture Association of America endorses the goals of Hollings' plan but stops short of actually embracing the proposed legislation itself.

"The MPAA agrees with the goals of the Hollings bill, that is, for the private parties to negotiate an agreement on Internet standards for content encryption, watermarking (and) digital rights management," MPAA President Jack Valenti said in a statement. "When an agreement is reached by the private parties, we will all then together support appropriate legislation regarding copyright protection in digital devices."

Hollings' office was closed Monday, and a representative could not immediately be reached.

In their press conference Monday, the technology companies said the market is already responding with adequate anti-piracy technology, such as that from Microsoft and an Intel-backed coalition of companies. But trying to make a single technology fit a variety of applications and devices--as was the case with SDMI and appears to be the case with Hollings' bill--is the

wrong way to go, the companies said.

"It's a mistake to say that there is a magic bullet out there that somebody's going to invent," said Jeff Lawrence, chairman of Intel's copyright protection group.

#### Macromedia Claims It Owns Adobe Patent

Software-maker Macromedia Inc. is claiming it owns the patent to Adobe Systems Inc.'s popular Photoshop program, according to a suit filed in federal court Friday.

Macromedia, of San Francisco, alleges that the technology behind San Jose-based Adobe's Photoshop and GoLive programs was patented by Macromedia in 1998. The programs are used for creating and editing Web sites and other uses.

Photoshop is a best-selling product for Adobe, a \$1.3 billion company and the nation's leading desktop publishing software maker. The latest retail price for the newest version is \$609. GoLive, a Web-authoring tool, sells for \$284.

Macromedia is asking a judge to block Adobe from selling the software and seeking ''damages in an amount not yet determined."

No court date has been set. Adobe was not immediately available for comment.

The case is Macromedia v. Adobe, C01-3940.

#### Activists Decry Inaction on New Microsoft OS

Consumer and privacy groups criticized the U.S. government on Tuesday for failing to limit certain features on Microsoft Corp.'s new Windows XP operating system that they say compromise users' privacy.

Privacy groups, led by the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said the Federal Trade Commission should have taken action when they filed their first complaint this summer.

The complaint, signed by 13 organizations, alleges that the new operating system coerces users into revealing sensitive personal information with little control over how it will be used.

In the face of government inaction, several groups said Tuesday that consumers should take pains to avoid signing up for Microsoft's Passport online identity service when they upgrade to Windows XP, which is due out Thursday.

Passport aims to streamline online browsing and shopping by consolidating passwords, credit card numbers and other personal information.

Microsoft has already signed up 165 million users, many of them through its free Hotmail email service. Users are encouraged repeatedly to sign up for



the service when they set up Windows XP.

Microsoft says Passport will give Web surfers more convenience and control over what information they reveal about themselves, but EPIC and others charge that it will allow the world's largest software maker to amass a giant database of millions of Internet users who have little control over how information about them is distributed.

Activists point to a spate of recent hacking incidents to claim that Microsoft databases are also vulnerable to intrusion.

EPIC and other consumer groups want the FTC to investigate whether Passport amounts to an "unfair and deceptive trade practice" under federal law.

The consumer-protection agency's willingness to investigate these claims "is a critical test of the FTC's ability to protect consumer interests in the online world," said EPIC Executive Director Marc Rotenberg in a conference call.

An FTC spokeswoman said she could not comment on any ongoing investigations, but said she was not aware of any investigation into Passport or Windows XP.

"It hasn't crossed my radar screen, and that's pretty significant," said Kathy McFarland.

A Microsoft spokeswoman said the company had already addressed the consumer groups' concerns.

"There's not a whole lot new here except for recycled complaints, and Microsoft has addressed these complaints and continues to address these complaints," said Microsoft spokeswoman Tonya Klause.

Since first unveiling XP early this summer, Microsoft said it would make Passport more open to other companies and require online merchants using Passport to employ P3P technology, which allows consumers to more easily determine the privacy practices of a Web site.

But those changes are not enough, privacy groups said.

A central point of dispute is the Windows XP registration process, which asks users five separate times if they would like to set up a Passport account. Privacy groups want that process changed.

Jason Catlett, president of privacy group Junkbusters Corp., said consumers should not be led to believe that they must sign up for Passport in order to access the Internet.

"Microsoft is not the lord of the Internet, however much they claim to be," he said. "My advice is just say no, no, no, no, no."

Catlett and others stopped short of calling on consumers to boycott the new operating system, which boasts increased stability among its many new features.

But consumers should not be forced to give up their privacy in order to enjoy a computer that crashes less often, he said.

"Consumers shouldn't have to weigh four blue screens of death per week versus having their privacy violated," he said.

## U.S. Takes Heat for Backing Off Windows XP

The U.S. government, already locked in a bitter, seemingly never-ending legal struggle with Microsoft Corp. over its ubiquitous Windows operating system, was blasted by consumer groups Tuesday for failing to take on the company's next-generation operating system.

The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) and 13 other organizations sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), chastising it for failing to challenge certain aspects of Windows XP, which is due for a splashy US\$250 million release on Thursday.

"XP is going to be released tomorrow and we're disappointed [the FTC] didn't act on our earlier complaints," EPIC spokeswoman Sarah Andrews told NewsFactor Network.

"Maybe it's just concern that Microsoft is a huge player in the nation's economy and they don't want to disrupt that. But I would say the combination of the privacy and antitrust issues makes it a perfect case for the FTC."

The consumer coalition submitted a complaint to the FTC in July and followed up with another in August, detailing what it considered "serious privacy implications" involving XP as well as Microsoft Passport. Among other things, the complaint alleged that Passport "coerces users" into divulging personal information while giving them little control over the ways in which that information is used.

"Despite detailing numerous privacy issues associated with XP in the July and August filings, the FTC has taken no public action to protect consumers and has failed to address the allegations set forth in our complaint," the letter said.

Consumer groups are concerned that Passport's information-collecting practices will erode consumer privacy and security, and eventually affect consumer confidence and e-commerce.

"Microsoft's ability to track, profile and monitor the 165 million users has far-reaching and profound implications for privacy protection in general and in particular with regard to the growth of electronic commerce," the letter said.

Microsoft said it has addressed consumer complaints, but the EPIC-led complaint charged Microsoft's responses to widespread security and privacy concerns have been superficial and inadequate. The complaint adds that the company's announcement that it would open Passport to other companies addressed legal concerns, but not privacy issues.

Microsoft's numerous security lapses were also spelled out, saying they "support our claims that Microsoft's guarantees of privacy and security are deceptive and unfair to consumers," the letter said.

"Further, Microsoft's failure to disclose the actual risks associated with the collection and use of personal information in the Passport service constitutes an unfair and deceptive trade practice."

The complaint calls for investigations into Microsoft's business practices and urges the FTC to force Microsoft, among other things, to revise XP registration procedures.

The good news for Microsoft is that the U.S. Senate has postponed hearings scheduled to look into anti-competitive issues raised by XP, as legislators cleared the way for the new anti-terrorist laws. No new date has been set.

The hearings were scheduled after Senator Charles Schumer of New York criticized Windows XP, saying Microsoft "intended to maximize its monopolistic power" through its integration of the new operating system and various Web-based services.

Some believed the hearings would have delayed the release of XP, which has been shipped in new computers by vendors since the end of September.

On another positive note for Microsoft, the European Commission reiterated this week that it had no plans to formally investigate the new operating system.

Documents released earlier this month revealed that the EC has accused Microsoft of trying to obstruct an investigation into the company's alleged antitrust behavior, and of misleading investigators by presenting false supporting evidence, according to published reports.

#### Microsoft Explores Legal Options Against Hacker

Microsoft said on Monday it was looking into its legal options regarding an unidentified hacker who breached its anti-piracy technology last week, enabling users to distribute songs without restrictions.

Microsoft group product manager Jonathan Usher told Reuters the damage to Microsoft's overall digital rights management software would be slight, although some music on the market had lost its protection.

"We learned about the hack on Friday and were on the phone with our content partners right away," he said. "We have built in a means to update the protections for cases such as this, and we're still implementing that renewability."

The breach by the anonymous hacker named "Beale Screamer" stripped the software of protections used by many content providers to protect music and video online.

The identity of the hacker who was distributing the software is under investigation. "We're investigating our legal options," Usher said. "Our real focus right now is working with our content providers."

Microsoft has said its Windows Media has the broadest reach of any DRM technology. More than 275 companies have licensed Windows Media DRM to create secure distribution systems for audio and video content.

DRM has become increasingly important to Microsoft as it moves ahead in the battle over the market for streaming media.

Last week's hack had compromised Windows Media audio version 7, which was

released about 18 months ago, Usher said. "The majority of the content is protected with earlier versions of the DRM," he added.

Usher said Microsoft's content partners had been very understanding. "We have been forthright that no technology and no DRM is 100 percent secure," he said, adding that Microsoft has anticipated hacks such as this.

Users must first purchase a digital music file in order to exploit the hacker's software, he said. If they have access to the Screamer software, they could then strip off the locks on the purchased file and distribute the songs without restrictions.

In July, Microsoft struck a deal to offer Pressplay, an Internet service formed by recording giants Vivendi Universal and Sony Corp. on its MSN network, using Windows Media format and the digital rights software. Pressplay is set to launch later this fall.

"This doesn't change Microsoft's prospects or the recording labels' positioning. This hack only affected one version of the Microsoft software," said Aram Sinnreich, analyst with Jupiter Media Metrix.

"DRM technology has not and never will be 100 percent secure. One can naturally expect this to happen in digital media and business models have to acknowledge some degree of piracy will happen rather than pretend it won't," said Sinnreich.

This is the second time that Microsoft's DRM technology has been compromised. Programmers in 1999 breached security features used in Windows Media audio version 4 the day after it was released, but the company quickly fixed the problem, it said.

"The fact that they got hacked is no big shock," said GartnerG2 analyst P.J. McNealy. "This is a high-profile piece of software and not surprising it was a target."

#### Bush Signs Spy Bill Leaving Privacy Advocates Reeling

The sweeping antiterrorism bill sailed through the U.S. Senate Thursday with a resounding 98-1 vote and was swiftly signed by President Bush in the White House on Friday.

Providing law enforcement agencies with vastly increased powers to conduct widespread wiretapping and electronic surveillance, the legislation also increases punishment for terrorist acts and institutes penalties for harboring or financing terrorists.

But while the public and Congress heave a collective sigh of relief, privacy advocates and libraries across the country are struggling with how to adjust to the changes.

Ari Schwartz of the Center for Democracy and Technology told NewsFactor Network that besides the loss of a judicial review before wiretaps and surveillance are put into place, the new bill may put innocent library patrons at risk.

"The FBI or law enforcement can come in and say, 'We want to look at this person and we know they use this institution and we want to monitor all

the traffic that goes in and out,' which [could] include non-targets, completely innocent people," said Schwartz.

Federal law enforcement also would have the ability to summon business records from libraries and educational institutions, but Schwartz fears that without a court to oversee the process, there are no checks and balances in place.

"Plus, as libraries and universities don't have terms of service, anything could be seen as trespassing," Schwartz said.

When it was discovered after September 11th that at least one terrorist may have used a Broward County, Florida, public library to communicate with fellow terrorists, the FBI visited library director Sam Morrison asking for computer records.

Morrison told NewsFactor that the library turned over all the information it had to the FBI on the same day. But since then, despite the headlines, Morrison has yet to change any of the library's computer use policies.

"Anyone who wants to use the computer comes in, and if there is one available they sit down and use it. There's been no indication to me that a policy change is useful, much less desirable," said Morrison, adding that the library would be willing to make a change if it could be shown to be helpful.

Claudette Tennant, Internet policy specialist for the American Library Association (ALA), told NewsFactor that while some libraries around the country may be taking a close look at their policies, she does not believe they will "proscribe a person's rights as they walk through the door.

"We're going to have to wait and see how it all plays out. We're going to have to be vigilant and be a conduit of information to our libraries," said Tennant.

But in a letter to Congress on October 2nd, the ALA cited the antiterrorism law's expansion of Internet tracing devices, access to business records and access to educational institutional records as potentially threatening to public rights, adding that the provision "undermines the confidentiality that is critical to the flow of information."

But some privacy advocates see other, more pressing battles to be fought on the war against terrorism.

"The terrorists used a lot of things: credit cards, rental cards. Where do we stop?" asked Richard Smith, chief technology officer and security and privacy expert for the Privacy Foundation.

"These guys had no problem giving out their real names in almost all cases, and using real, legitimate IDs. Whatever those rules were, they'd follow them," explained Smith.

Regarding the antiterrorism bill, Smith believes such surveillance measures are unnecessary and calls for a focus on more specific laws and regulations that would keep better check on potentially hazardous situations and materials.

"The three things that stick out in my mind are that you don't let hijackers into cockpits of airplanes; you may want to have some better

accountability of who can take flying lessons; and you may want to have a better check when you're giving visas to people of other countries," Smith noted.

### Microsoft Web Portal Denies Millions

Microsoft's premiere Web portal, MSN.com, denied entry to millions of people who use alternative browser software such as Opera and told them to get Microsoft's products instead.

The decision led to complaints from the small but loyal Opera community that Microsoft Corp. was abusing its status as the Internet's browser leader. Microsoft later backed off and said Friday it would support the other browsers after all.

Browser products affected included Opera, Mozilla and Amaya, said Kevin Reichard, editorial manager for Internet.com's BrowserWatch site.

He said version 4.7 of Netscape's browser worked, while Microsoft said MSN also supported Netscape version 6.0, which is based on Mozilla.

Opera is the Internet's No. 3 browser software, with more than 2 million active users, though it's dwarfed by its competitors. It uses less memory and less disk space than Microsoft's and Netscape's browsers, and Opera users say they can surf the Web faster.

Opera users complained that Microsoft's tactics reduced choice.

"It shows that Microsoft unfortunately has a stranglehold on the Internet community, where they can force users to use their browser," said Tim Altman, a Lynchburg College student who uses Opera.

Mike Pettit, president of ProComp, an anti-Microsoft group, urged state and federal investigators to look into the matter as part of their ongoing lawsuit accusing Microsoft of anticompetitive practices.

Jon S. von Tetzchner, chief executive of Opera Software, said he first heard from Opera users Thursday that they were being shut out of MSN.com after the Web site underwent a face-lift.

The blockage coincided with Microsoft's showcase launch of its Windows XP operating system. Instead of getting MSN's news, games and shopping features, Opera users were given links to download Microsoft's browsers.

Tetzchner said Microsoft originally offered the excuse that Opera did not support the latest standards from the World Wide Web Consortium, or W3C, an independent standards body. But he insisted that Opera supported the standards better than Microsoft did.

A Microsoft spokeswoman said no one was immediately available for an interview. In a statement, MSN marketing director Bob Visse said Microsoft wanted to maximize the user experience.

"If customers choose to use a browser that does not tightly support W3C standards then they may encounter a less than optimal experience on MSN," Visse said. "However, we still welcome them to enjoy our services at whatever level available."

The statement did not address claims that Microsoft's own pages do not comply with the standards, and a check of some MSN pages through W3C's validator feature returned examples of coding noncompliance.

Tetzchner called the Microsoft move a likely acknowledgment of his 6-year-old company's higher profile in the Internet business world.

"Most of the players in the Internet world know who we are and are taking us seriously and I think this incident shows that Microsoft is one of those players," Tetzchner said.

Tetzchner said Opera recently reached a major deal with Symbian, a partnership that includes Nokia and Ericsson, to be the default browser on a number of wireless devices that connect to the Internet.

According to WebSideStory's StatMarket, Microsoft's Internet Explorer is the leading browser, used by nearly 87 percent of the U.S. online population. Netscape had 13 percent, while Opera had less than 1 percent.

#### Cyber Warriors Gun for Bin Laden

U.S. armed forces are not the only ones taking aim at Osama bin Laden. The weird, wacky -- and tacky -- world of the Internet has allowed surfers to join the chase for the world's most wanted man.

While the real bin Laden may have eluded capture, his virtual likeness has not, with an endless stream of Web sites and emailed jokes, games and pictures allowing keyboard cowboys to shoot, bomb or just ridicule the man Washington accuses of masterminding last month's attacks.

Many of the sites are violent, but most have an underlying element of humor that players say provides relief in the trauma that has followed the September 11 attacks on the United States.

"I really shouldn't find these things funny and amusing but the truth is I do," said Haitham Dayeh, a Lebanese advertising executive who works in Dubai. "I guess it boosts morale."

New York based company CyberExtruder ([www.cyberextruder.com](http://www.cyberextruder.com)) said it had seen a massive surge in users since it created a virtual copy, or "skin," of bin Laden that can be downloaded and imported onto a range of video games.

Company chief executive Larry Gardner told Reuters that the bin Laden character has been downloaded more than 120,000 times since it was posted on September 25 -- with less than a dozen complaints from people who thought the "skin" in bad taste.

Gardner said people wanted to poke fun at bin Laden and "diminish" the enemy in the same way the Allies did with Adolf Hitler in cartoons during World War Two.

"One of the things we found to be most interesting about this phenomenon is that, while the majority of the downloads are coming from the United States, nearly as many are coming from other countries," he said.

By popular demand, the company has also posted likenesses of a camouflage-clad U.S President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair -- the two principal Western warriors in the terror crackdown -- so users can organize their own global war.

At [www.twistedhumor.com](http://www.twistedhumor.com), players of "Yo Mamma, Osama" head to the desert to hunt bin Laden with rockets and cannonballs.

Twistedhumor's marketing manager Jason Day said the game had been downloaded more than 100,000 times in its first 12 hours and was on track to be one of the net's most downloaded files.

"The game was created as a catalyst for charitable donations to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund," Day said. "But we feel that laughter can, at times, be a great healer when dealing with tragedy.

Charitable intentions aside, good taste has never been an Internet forte.

A spoof video on [www.newgrounds.com](http://www.newgrounds.com) that pits a flatulent Bush against an equally gassy bin Laden is among the less bloody offerings. At the other extreme, one animated email doing the rounds allows the user to feed a howling bin Laden into a wood chipper and revel in the inevitable results.

"There is a risk of stigmatizing the whole community merely by association. Jokes are fine, but there is a line and it is always difficult to find that line," said Mahmud al Rashid, deputy secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain.

One surfer in Dubai said mock photos of Bush and bin Laden making love were doing the rounds in Jordan and Kuwait. Questionable jokes were also whizzing between Europe and the Far East, while mobile phones from Pakistan to Britain have registered text messages purporting to come from bin Laden.

"Whether it's black humor or light relief, it acts like therapy," said one London office worker addicted to an online bin Laden shooting gallery. "Naturally, when people find it difficult to cope with reality, there's nothing better than humor to remind us that life's too short for worrying."

Nor is the vilification limited to cyberspace.

There is now a best-selling bin Laden toilet paper, gun targets and even a song doing the rounds to the tune of the old Harry Belafonte classic -- "Hey Mr. Taliban, Taliban banana, Air Force come and it flatten my home."

Last week pictures of Sesame Street favorite Bert popped up on a bin Laden placard in anti-U.S. protests in Bangladesh. The images were projected around a terrified world, providing some respite from anthrax, air campaigns and all the global grieving.

"Humor is the only thing that keeps you sane in this mess," said one Dutch Internet user who has sampled the bin Laden humor. "Mockery is one thing you can be sure will infuriate any fundamentalist. If you can joke, you know you're free."



An e-mail announcing a new Trojan horse scanner is itself an Internet worm that could flood e-mail servers with useless mail.

With more people all the time connected to the Internet, the danger of Trojan horses, malicious programs that communicate passwords and other private information to others on the Internet, is very real. Antset is a worm that arrives by e-mail and claims to be a Trojan horse scanner. It is not. At least three variations of Antset (W32.Anset.A@mm, W32.Anset.B@mm, and W32.Anset.C@mm) are floating around the Internet. Antset is capable only of sending multiple e-mail messages and does not damage PCs, so this worm ranks a 4 on the ZDNet Virus Meter.

Antset arrives as an e-mail solicitation for a Trojan horse scanner. The subject line reads "ANTS Version 3.0." The body text for the original worm is in German, and reads: "Hi, Anh ngend die neue Version 3.0 von ANTS, dem bislang einzigartigen kostenlosen Trojanerscanner. Zum installieren einfach die angef gte Datei ausf hren." The English translation reads: "Hi, attached you will find the brand new version 3.0 of ANTS, the unique freeware Trojan scanner. To install ANTS, simply run the attached setup file." The body text concludes with the following salutation "Adieu, Andreas webmaster@avnetwork.de <http://www.ants-online.de>." The named Web site is legitimate but contains a disclaimer regarding this worm. Antset also contains an attachment named ants3set.exe.

If a user clicks the attached file, Antset searches the Microsoft Outlook address book for addresses to which to send copies of itself, then looks for more e-mail addresses within the following file types: PHP, HTM, SHTM, CGI, and PL.

Worms like Antset usually contain a Registry key that prevents the worm from installing itself more than once. Antset does not have this feature and could produce multiple Registry entries and numerous extra files in the Windows subdirectory. Antset also has a few programming bugs that affect its ability to spread and may not function on all Windows computers.

Most antivirus software companies have updated their signature files to include this worm. For more information on removing Antset from your system, see Kaspersky, McAfee, Sophos, Symantec, and Trend Micro.

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